

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VIEWS OF SOCIALIST VICE PRESIDENT OF LOMBARDY REGION

1. GIOGIO GANGI, EARLY MIDDLE-AGED VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REGION OF LOMBARDIA, TOLD ME ON MARCH 11 THAT THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION HAD REACHED CRITICAL PROPORTIONS. HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM THE SOCIALIST CONGRESS IN ROME. ACCORDING TO GANGI, THE SOCIALISTS HAD NO INTENTION OF FORCING A GOVERNMENT CRISIS AND NEW ELECTIONS. BUT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS DECIDED THAT EARLY ELECTIONS WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO DRAGGING OUT THE PRESENT CHAOS FOR ANOTHER YEAR.

2. GANGI CONTENDED THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WERE IN PROFOUND CRISIS AND HAD NO HOPE OF RECOVERING THEIR FORMER STRENGTH. THE COMMUNISTS WERE STEADILY ADVANCING. THE MINOR PARTIES WERE ALL BUT NON-EXISTENT. THEREFORE, UNLESS THE SOCIALISTS WERE ABLE TO ASSEMBLE A BLOCK OF VOTES BASED ON THE ADHERENCE OF REPUBLICANS SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND LIBERAL VOTERS THAT WOULD ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT A QUARTER OF THE ELECTORATE, THERE WAS A RISK NOT ONLY TO THE POLITICAL BALANCE IN ITALY, BUT TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE REGIME AS WELL. THE ONLY HOPE OF MAINTAINING DEMOCRACY, HE SAID, WAS FOR THE SOCIALISTS PARTY

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TO BECOME A MAJOR FORCE WHICH COULD AFFORD TO ALLY WITH

A REFORMED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT.

3. SUCH AN ALLIANCE WOULD HAVE TO BE ON A NEW BASIS. THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT WAS DEEPLY COMPROMISED AND NO LONGER REFLECTED THE REAL BALANCE OF FORCES WITHIN THE COUNTRY. THE SOCIALISTS WOULD NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT UNTIL NEW ELECTIONS HAD BEEN HELD. THEN, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE SEEN WHAT COULD BE DONE. IF THE SOCIALISTS EMERGED WITH A LARGE ENOUGH WEIGHT, THEY COULD ALLY WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IF GIVEN A MORE INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN THE CABINET. THAT COULD INCLUDE THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP. BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO BE ON A BASIS IN WHICH THE SOCIALISTS COULD EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO GOVERN THE COUNTRY EFFECTIVELY AND NOT SIMPLY BE DEAD-LOCKED WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS.

4. IN LARGE PART THE FUTURE DEPENDED ON THE UNITED STATES. BUT ITS POLICY WAS INEXPLICABLE, GANGI SAID. HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE UNITED STATES WAS MAKING SO MANY CONCESSIONS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND HAD CAVED IN ON ANGOLA. HE KNEW AFRICA, HE SAID. THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPINGS IN AFRICA WERE PRO-WESTERN. THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN DEFEATED. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE USED ITS POWER TO PREVENT THE INTERVENTION OF THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS. IT WAS A SERIOUS DEFEAT FOR THE WEST.

5. MOREOVER, SAID GANGI, THE UNITED STATES HAD FAILED TO GIVE MORE THAN LIP SERVICE TO SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN UNIFICATION AND HAD GIVEN NO SUPPORT AT ALL TO THE EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS WHO WERE THE ONLY FORCE THAT COULD REALLY STOP THE COMMUNISTS. THAT, HE SAID, HAD BEEN SHOWN IN PORTUGAL.

6. ACCORDING TO GANGI, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THE EXISTING EQUILIBRIUM WITH THE SOVIET UNION. IT
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WAS WITHIN THAT EQUILIBRIUM THAT THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS COULD BE BROUGHT CLOSER TO DEMOCRACY. IN FACT, HE SAID, BERLINGUER AND HIS BACKERS WANTED ABOVE ALL TO AVOID SOVIET PREDOMINANCE, BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE THE FIRST TO GO THE WAY OF DUBCHECK.

7. GANGI CONCLUDED THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD STOP BACKING THE ITALIAN RIGHT AND THE CHRISTIAN

DEMOCRATS AS THE ONLY DEFENSE AGAINST COMMUNISM.
THE FACT WAS THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY WAS
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTINUING GAINS OF THE COMMUNISTS.
IT WAS TIME, HE URGED, THAT THE UNITED STATES GAVE
ITS BACKING TO THE SOCIALISTS WHO, ALONE, COULD HOPE TO
COMPETE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE COMMUNISTS.FINA

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